



## With God's help we are being used to meet local need

Tom McGibbon is minister at Cleveleys Baptist Church, in the Blackpool area of the Fylde coast (and not far from the Norbreck Castle Hotel of Baptist Assembly fame!). He shares the story of the church becoming more outward-looking and reaching new people in creative ways.

**P**rior to 2018, the church had low expectations. It was providing for the needs of the congregation, but wasn't outward-looking. Confidence and vision were low.

We are an adult Sunday congregation with a few children and young people. Back in 2019, God led us to put a 'Children's Soft Play' area in the main sanctuary. This seemed to some a pointless exercise, with so few children. I am pleased to say that we now have more children and the 'Soft Play' area is being put to good use.

God has continued to widen our horizons and our main good news story is about our Transformed Lives for Good (TLG) 'Make Lunch Club' and 'Boxes of Hope.' TLG is a national charity providing services to families in need.

The Make Lunch Club and the associated Boxes of Hope (food parcels and gifts) are about providing a friendly atmosphere for social interaction, games, and craft for families in need, whilst providing a meal for everyone, one day a week, throughout all school holidays. We also offer a Foodbank at each of our sessions.

When this idea was first brought to the church, some were sceptical, saying things like 'There are no families in need in Cleveleys' and 'We don't have the

people or the funds to do this.' How wrong all that was! We now have a thriving Make Lunch Club, fully staffed with volunteers, funding that has been provided by ring-fenced giving within the church family - and grants have also been received.

Families have been coming regularly and relationships are being built. Many of the children are now regulars at our weekday activities and our 'Little Angels' Baby and Toddler Group.

It was perceived that there wasn't a need, and if there was, we could not provide for it. But we have seen the need and with God's help we are being used to meet it. This has been a huge catalyst for us as we continue to reach out and see what God will do. We are so looking forward to what comes next.

**Who are the people who aren't part of your church, and what steps could you take to engage with them and make your space more inviting?**



**Cleveleys Baptist Church is supported by Home Mission funding**

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